

## AMHERST CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES APPROVED

Amherst Town Hall –April 10, 2011 DRAFT

**Meeting called to order** at 7:10 PM by John Harvey

**Attendance:** John Harvey, Bill Wichman, Rich Hart, Gary Cole, Jack Gleason Anne Krantz, Alternate Bruce Beckley, Lee Gilman, Selectman Dwight Brew.

**Additions** to published agenda:

1. Matt Arnold about timber harvest on the Arnold lot (ACC easement)
2. B & M Trail and manure problems

**Correspondence:** Announcement of DOT pavement rehab meeting on April 18

**Minutes:** Minutes from March approved as sent

**Treasurer** – Bill reported that two Current Use tax deposits have increased our land account:

Land estimate               \$301,043.12

Gift                               \$9,398.53

Includes proceeds from Walk Book of \$1,945 including \$88.00 from sales at the Trails Expo on Sat

Budget                               \$230.00

Treasurer's report approved

**Planning Board** – Rich passed around the plans for the newly approved 103 foot tall cell tower on North Meadow Rd. A condition of approval is that the artificial tree tower must have limbs low enough to integrate with the natural tree canopy.

**Topics:**

### **Joppa Trailhead & Gate/ Non-Motorized Vehicles Policy/Class 6 Roads**

John summarized the situation:

- The Class 6 Road in Joppa Hill is a key component of an extensive trail and greenway system
- Class 6 roads by RSA are not maintained by towns Highway Depts, and are in the Selectmen's purview. They are subject to gates and bars (unlocked). The RSAs do not say who installs.
- Class 6 roads can't be closed to the public

Discussion:

Jack thought the gates & bars go back to agriculture uses to keep animals; bars - the pipes in roads to prevent cattle from crossing. ACC wants to maintain farm machinery access to the Joppa fields

The Police Chief has had Pulpit Brook Association abutter complaints of trucks driving on the town managed portion of the Class 6 Road Old Joppa Hill road.

Rich wondered what happens to the Class 6 Road in Bedford – discontinued?

Class 6 Roads can be turned into Class A Trails by a Warrant Article. Bruce pointed out that the RSA allows restrictions on class A trails.

Dwight suggested that ACC should not let the Class 6 road be discontinued because of reasons stated.

John reminded ACC that the idea of a parking area in the triangle at the end of Joppa Class 6 Road was put on hold at last meeting.

Action: John will summarize the ACC Class 6 Road Management Policy citing the importance of these town owned lands to the Amherst Trail system.

The request for (unlocked) gates by the Pulpit Brook Homeowners Assn. - Dwight will brief the Selectmen on Mon., April 11, and solicit questions prior to a selectmen's vote the following week.

John - the Motorized Vehicle Policy is ready for Selectmen review. Dwight suggested that it be presented to them find out what else they want to know prior to voting.

### **Matt Arnold, 29 Austin Rd. – Timber harvest**

Wants to do selective cutting of trees on the Arnold Tract (conservation easement is in the deed – the Arnold's retain the 'timber rights'). Matt will work with consulting forester Charlie Koch and send the proposed plan via e-mail to the Commission. NH Timber Harvesting Laws and Best Management Practices will be followed. Basil Area Law (RSA 227-J:9) "Buffers must be left along town and state roads, streams and bodies of water" the Slash Law (RSA 227-J:10) "No logging slash may be left in or near bodies of water." ACC would also like a buffer along the Bicentennial Trail.

### **Expedited Permit for D&F for Map 9 - Lot 7, Taylor, 173 Mack Hill Rd – Tom Carr, Meridian Land Services**

Existing box culvert is failing and the permit is for a replacement 30" culvert sunk into the mud 6" to provide a dirt floor for the stream bed. The driveway will remain the same size.

Discussion – what about the beavers? Tom they exist and are a constant problem. Approved.

John signed the plans that go to the Town Clerk on Mon. The state has 30 days to review and approve.

**Dwight** – will continue as the Selectmen representative. He clarified whether he is a voting member – No; at times he must vote with the Selectmen about ACC actions.

### **Plans & Permits**

**LaBelle Winery** – 101 next to Bragdon sledding hill. No wetlands issues and no ACC comments.

**Conceptual Sub-division** at Bedford end of Pulpit Road with access to 6 ? houses through Bedford. No ACC comment

**Meadow Management** – Jack reviewed the agreement with Kevin Pomeroy who grew corn on the Scott land last year. Because of the severe drought he barely broke even but is willing to try again this year. Last year ACC gave him \$1,500 for fertilizer due to the extremely low potassium and nutrients levels. Jack moved and Anne 2<sup>nd</sup> that we do this for one more year to allow the soil to come back into normal nutrient ranges so the fertilizer costs in future will be much less. Jack noted that the \$2,000 Grant is expected any day now and that Steve Blaise will pay \$750 toward the fertilizer cost on Bragdon last year. He has applied for the same grant for this year. Motion Approved.

Jack will figure the costs for fertilizer for Bragdon and e-mail.

**B & M Trail** and manure complaints.

Hikers have complained that there is excessive manure on the trail because the manure is being moved across the trail to farm owned land on the other side very near the open water of Weston Pond.

The NH Dept of Ag and DES have investigated complaints about manure and erosion at the Walnut Hollow Farm horse farm on Walnut Hill Rd in the past and issued recommendations that included, among others, that:

- Manure be disposed of off site
- Horses should be fenced off from the intermittent stream bed that flows through one of the pastures.

As seen from the road and trail, these BMPs appear to be no longer practiced.

Discussion – other town Departments with jurisdiction? Best to have State investigate.

It was moved and 2<sup>nd</sup> that ACC request another investigation into the situation by appropriate state agencies.

Discussion – the previous file should be referenced. Vote: 6 yes, 1 no.

John took an action to request Gary MacGuire to review the Rec Commission's sponsorship of Walnut Hollow Farm horseback riding as a town-sponsored activity since the B&M cannot be used for commercial purposes.

**Round Table**

Lee – asked if we would follow up with the DPW's offer to flail the rosebushes at the base of the road to upper Bragdon. An e-mail request will be sent to Bruce Berry.

Canoe Port – Lee: do we want to continue the battle of the invasives? Yes, should keep at it.

Lee will resubmit the herbicide permit to the NH Pesticides Dept. Maybe we can get the town to use its flail in there to knock back the black swallowwort and poison ivy this spring. Another e-mail to the Town

**Bill & Rich** – Thanks! They spent all day at the Trails Expo at Hampshire Hills – sold Walk Books.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Krantz, secretary